IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	: Randall Frank et al.	Art Unit	: 2143
Serial No.	: 10/728,374	Examiner	: Anish Sikri
Filed	: December 4, 2003	Conf. No.	: 6383
Title	: INTEGRATING MULTIPLE COMMUNICATION MODES		

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BRIEF ON APPEAL

(1) Real Party in Interest

The real party in interest is FMR Corp., a corporation of Delaware having a place of business at 82 Devonshire Street, Boston, MA 02109, as evidenced by an assignment executed June 2, 2004 and recorded at the U.S. Patent Office on June 10, 2004 at Reel 01472, Frame 0366.

(2) Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no related appeals or interferences.

(3) Status of Claims

Claims 1-33, 89 and 90 are pending and on appeal. Of these, claims 1, 18, 33 and 89 are independent.

(4) Status of Amendments

Amendments for claim 89 have not been entered.

(5) Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

All citations herein are made with reference to the specification of this application, filed on December 4, 2003.

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Claim 1

Claim 1's limitation of receiving from a first person a request to converse with a second person using a selected first one of two or more selectable communication modes is described on page 16, lines 11 to 22.

Claim 1's limitation of in response to the received request, automatically performing an action using a second one of the two more communication modes is described on page 17, lines 14 to 31.

Claim 1's limitation of selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the second person is taught on page 17, lines 14 to 31.

Claim 12

Claim 12's limitation of forwarding the request to converse to a third person if a current status of the second person is that the second person is unavailable to converse and the third person is available to converse is described on page 17, lines 14 to 31.

Claim 24

Claim 24's limitation that a telephone configured to send the request to converse is described on page 18, line 26 to page 19, line 6.

Claim 29

Claim 29's limitation that the switched local area network is configured to connect to an internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway is described on page 18, line 26 to page 19, line 6 and figure 8.

(6) Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

1. Claims 1-9, 11,13-23, 25-28, 33, 89 and 90 stand rejected as anticipated by *Tang* (U.S. Patent 5,793,365) under section 102(*b*).

2. Claims 10, 24 and 29-32 stand rejected as being rendered obvious by the combination of *Tang* and *Rudy* (U.S. Patent 6,360,252) under section 103(*a*).

3. Claim 12 stands rejected as being rendered obvious by the combination of *Tang* and *Malik* (U.S. Patent Publication 2004/0078443) under section 103(*a*).

(7) Argument

Appellants' specification

Appellant discloses integration software that automatically handles received communication requests. Using integration software, users communicate with one another using multiple modes of communication, such as voice messages, instant messages and e-mail.

The integration software includes a graphical user interface through which a user may program a rule for handling incoming communications from another user. To define a rule, the user defines actions to execute upon the occurrence of certain defined conditions. For example, some rules include conditions that are based on a user's status such as "In a Meeting," "On Vacation," "Sick" or "At work but Not on Computer." In addition to a given status, the user can also specify other conditions, such as a range of dates and times during which the rule applies.

The user then defines an action to perform when a communication is received from another user. For example, the user may specify that an incoming telephone call from another user should be routed to voicemail, or forwarded to the user's current location. In either case, it is the user who controls how another user contacts him.

Tang

Tang discloses a "gallery window 10" that allows users to communicate with each other. For each user, the "gallery window 10" displays that user's "level of activity." Like Appellants' system, *Tang*'s levels of activity include different classes of activity, such as "attentive," "idle," "engaged," "do not disturb," or "absent."[1] These activity levels provide a user with "social cues" about the "appropriateness" of contacting another user.

However, *Tang* never discusses a user-defined rule for handling incoming communications based in part on an activity level. In *Tang*, the user has no real control over incoming communications. At best, a user can place a "do not disturb" sign in his gallery window profile, and hope that peers will respect his wishes.

In fact, *Tang* discloses the converse of what is claimed. According to *Tang*, it is the user sending the communication, not the user receiving the communication, who chooses the mode of communication. In particular, *Tang* states that:

[1] *Tang,* column 5, line 56 to column 6, line 7.

> "*The gallery window 10 provides access to various communication services through a contact button 16. In a preferred embodiment, the current worker may engage any available communication mechanism with one or more of the workers represented in the gallery window 10 through simple point and click operations. In one embodiment, the current worker selects one or more of the icons 14, 17 in the gallery window 10, and then presses the contact button 16.*"[2]

Tang repeatedly points out that it the user sending the communication who directs the form of communication. For example, in a later passage, *Tang* describes:

> "*from the gallery window 10 the stick-up button 18 allows the current worker to create a message that may include text, recorded audio or video or the like, and direct that message to one or more workers selected from the displayed icons.*"[3]

Therefore, *Tang* fails to teach a system in which it is the user receiving the communication who selects the mode of communication, let alone doing so by a rule. This fundamental deficiency results in a flawed 102 rejection. These flaws are discussed in more detail below.

Rudy

Rudy discloses a method of presenting email attachments on a device that renders "it for presentation to the user," thus "avoiding attachment presentation problems."[4] As discussed in more detail below, for claims 24 and 29, *Rudy* fails to teach the claimed limitations. Moreover, for claims 10, 24 and 29-32, the Examiner has failed to provide a convincing line of reasoning as to why it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to combine *Rudy* with *Tang*. These deficiencies result in flawed 103 rejections for claims 10, 24 and 29-32.

Malik

Malik discloses a method for transferring instant messages from one user to another user. *Malik* describes "message reply logic" that sends an auto-reply message "in response to

[2] *Tang,* column 7, line 65 to column 8, line 5.
[3] *Tang,* column 8, lines 52 to 57.
[4] *Rudy*, column 1, lines 64 to 65.

receiving an IM message from the sender."[5] *Malik* also describes "message transfer logic" that forwards a message to the user at a different IM address.[6]

Malik does not, however, discuss sending reply or forwarded messages based on a party's availability. This deficiency results in a flawed 103 rejection for claim 12. This flaw is discussed in more detail below.

Section 102 rejection of claim 1

As discussed in detail below, the section 102 rejection is improper for least the following reasons:

1. *Tang* fails to teach "rules";
2. *Tang* fails to teach a selection of a communication mode determined by a rule; and
3. *Tang* fails to teach "in response to the received request, automatically performing an action using a second one . . . of the communication modes."

***Tang* fails to teach rules**

Claim 1 includes the limitation of

> "*selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the second person*"

In rejecting the claim, the Examiner confuses "rules" with "states." For example, the Examiner regards the five levels of activity in the following *Tang* passage as being five different rules:

> "*The level of activity of a worker may be characterized into a number of classes. In one embodiment of the present invention, there are at least five classes of activity:*
> *1) attentive: the worker as actively working at their computer, and is not engaged in any interaction with other workers. Thus, the worker is immediately available for interaction with other workers.*
> *2) idle: the worker is not actively working at their computer, and is not engaged in any interaction with other workers. The worker may not be in their office, and thus, may not be immediately available for interaction.*
> *3) engaged: the worker is currently engaged in a computer mediated interaction with other workers. (e.g., desktop video conference, chat)*

[5] *Malik*, paragraph 75.
[6] *Id.*

> *4) do not disturb: the worker has specifically indicated to others that they do not want to be disturbed at the current time. This activity level is preferably established by the worker.*
> *5) absent: the worker is not currently in their office. This activity level may be established by the worker or determined automatically.*"[7]

The above passage only describes a user's several states or "levels of activity." But states are not user-defined rules. For example, being "attentive" is certainly not a "rule." It is simply a person's state of consciousness, like being asleep or being inebriated.

By citing the foregoing passage, the Examiner implicitly equates a "rule" with a "state."[8] The Examiner also explicitly and incorrectly equated a "rule" with a "state:"

> *The user or the system decides the states/rules. If the user sets his/her activity as unavailable, then for the second/third party etc, the first user (targeted user) will appear unavailable, hence a rule has been set by the first user [].*[9]

The Examiner's characterization is contrary to how one of ordinary skill in the art would define a "rule" and a "state." One of ordinary skill in the art would immediately recognize that a rule causes certain actions to occur. A state does not, by itself, cause any action to occur.

"Rules" and "states" are often related. Typically, a rule triggers an action upon the occurrence of a specified state. For example, in Appellants' FIG. 6, a dialog box displays certain actions (towards the bottom of the dialog box) that occur when certain states (the middle section of the dialog box) occur. Moreover, the Appellants' describe:

> "*User 12 can set the conditions for the rule in area 544 and the actions for the rule in area 546.*"[10]

The Examiner seems to have focused on the fact that both Appellants and *Tang* describe states. In doing so, the Examiner has completely ignored claim 1's "rule" limitation. However, when a user sends a message to another user who is in one of *Tang*'s "states," nothing triggers a particular rule. For example, in *Tang,* a user in an "attentive" state would receive all the same

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[7] *Tang,* column 5, line 55 to column 6, line 10.
[8] *Final Office Action*, November 18, 2007, page 18. (The Examiner characterizes the "rule[s] created by [a] person" of claim 1 as *Tang*'s "states of the user.").
[9] *Id.*
[10] *Appellants' specification,* page 17, lines 17 to 18.

messages as a user in a "do not disturb" state.[11] *Tang* even describes its "states" as mere "social cues for establishing . . . interactions."[12] But *Tang* fails to ever describe these "social cues" as anything more than the software equivalent of hanging a "do not disturb" sign on a door. Nothing in *Tang* suggests that entry into a particular state triggers a rule. In contrast, when a user in the Appellants' system is "on vacation" the user can cause a rule to execute in response to an incoming communication, such as sending the call directly to voicemail.

***Tang* fails to teach a selection of a communication mode determined by a rule**

Additionally, claim 1 requires that a "*selection of the second mode [of communication]*" be "*determined by a rule created by the second person.*"

The Examiner identifies two passages from *Tang* that allegedly teach this step.[13] The first passage enumerates the user's activity levels.[14] This passage fails to even mention any modes of communication. Instead, it focuses on the user's state. Therefore, this passage not only fails to describe "a rule" but also fails to describe a "communication mode" as being "determined by the rule."

The second passage includes *Tang*'s claims 1 and 2. Both of these claims fail to teach a mode of communication that is in any way determined by a rule. With regard to communication modes, *Tang* claim 1 recites:

> "*at least one communication service accessible from the user interface display, and capable of establishing a communication link between a first computer of the first user and at least one computer of a second user in response to a first input by the first user selecting the at least one second user*"

However, this claim fails to describe how the communication link is selected. The only "selection" referred to in this claim is the selection of a second user by a first user. Clearly, a "second user" is a person, not a "communication mode," and a "first user" is a person, not a

[11] *Tang,* column 5, line 59 to column 6, line 4.
[12] *Tang,* column 4, lines 53 to 53.
[13] *Tang*, column 5, line 55 to column 6, line 10; and claims 1 and 2.
[14] *Tang,* column 5, lines 55 to column 6, line 10.

"rule." Therefore, a disclosure of a first person selecting a second person is not the same as a disclosure of a rule selecting a communication mode.

Tang's claim 2 fails to fix these deficiencies, instead claiming:

> "*at least one communication service accessible from the user interface display, and capable of establishing a communication link between a first computer of the first user and a computer of at least one second user in response to a first input by the first user in the user interface display selecting the visual representation of at least one second user*"

While *Tang*'s claim 2 discloses having a user select "the visual representation" of another user, it doesn't mention selecting the mode of communication, let alone selecting the mode using a rule created by a user.

Even if one were to accept the dubious proposition that one of *Tang*'s "states" is really some sort of "rule," *Tang* fails to describe how a "state" selects a mode of communication. For example, the two passages cited as allegedly teaching this limitation fail to specify how the mode of communication is determined when the user's state is "attentive" or "do not disturb."

By citing to these two passages as teaching the limitation of "selection of the second mode [of communication]" is "determined by a rule created by the second person," the Examiner has clearly read two limitations out of the claim: the selection limitation and the rule limitation. It seems that the Examiner has construed this limitation to only require a "communication mode," and thus equated *Tang*'s communication service with the Appellants' "communication mode." However, "[a]ll words in a claim must be considered in judging the patentability of that claim against the prior art."[15]

Claim 1 also requires that the mode of communication be selected "by a rule created by the second person." According to claim 1, the second person is the party with whom another person ("a first person") wants to converse. *Tang* clearly fails to teach this limitation. Instead, in *Tang*, the mode of communication is selected by either the first person or by a machine. In particular, *Tang* states:

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[15] *In re Wilson*, 424 F.2d 1382, 1385, 165 USPQ 494, 496 (CCPA 1970). See also *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 U.S.P.Q.2d 1031 (Federal Circuit 1994) ("The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) must consider all claim limitations when determining patentability of an invention over the prior art.") (Citations omitted).

> "*In a preferred embodiment, the communication server 80 selects the highest communication service available on both computers 101, which is typically video-conferencing. . . . In an alternate embodiment, the user selects the communication service level directly.*"[16]

In the above passage, "the user" refers to a first person, because "the user" was previously defined as the person initiating the communication.[17] The Examiner again has either misconstrued or ignored the claim limitations.

Tang fails to teach "in response to the received request, automatically performing an action using a second one . . . of the communication modes."

Claim 1 also includes the limitation of

> *in response to the received request, automatically performing an action using a second one of the two or more communication modes*

For this limitation, the Examiner incorrectly cites to the same two passages of *Tang*[18] that were cited to for teaching "*selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the second person*." As previously discussed, the first passage describes a user's "level of activity." An activity level is not a "rule created by the second person." Unlike a rule, an activity level does not automatically perform any action.

Moreover, *Tang*'s claims 1 and 2 fail to correct this deficiency. The Examiner appears to regard Appellants' "*in response to the received request, automatically performing an action*" as corresponding to *Tang*'s "*[the establishment] of a communication link . . . in response to a first input*." [19] However, *Tang*'s claims clearly fail to teach that a second communication mode is used in "*automatically performing an action*."

Appellants clearly distinguish between first and second communication modes. In Appellants' claim 1, the first communication mode is selected by a "first person" and the second communication mode is selected by a "second person." However, *Tang*'s "*communication link*"

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[16] *Tang*, column 14, lines 40 to 58.
[17] *Tang*, column 14, lines 20 to 21 ("The user double clicks 701 an icon 14 displayed in the gallery window 10.").
[18] *Tang*, column 5, line 55 to column 6, line 10; and claims 1 and 2.
[19] *Tang*, claim 2 (stating "*at least one communication service accessible from the user interface display, and capable of establishing a communication link between a first computer of the first user and a computer of at least one second user in response to a first input by the first user in the user interface display selecting the visual representation of at least one second user*").

is established "*in response to a first input by the first user*" and thus the communication mode is a first communication mode. For *Tang* to anticipate this claim, the communication link would have to be in response to an input by the second user, thus making the communication mode a second communication mode. *Tang* fails to teach this and thus fails to anticipate Appellants' claim 1 for this additional reason.

In summary, the Examiner has cited to the exact same passages from *Tang* as teaching two distinct claim limitations: (a) *in response to the received request, automatically performing an action using a second one of the two or more communication modes* and (b) *selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the second person.* Citing to the same passage as teaching these distinct claim limitations and numerous claim elements seems to have caused the Examiner to overlook many of the elements included within these limitations, such as selecting the mode of communication and basing the selection on a rule created by the second person.[20] Such oversight it not only clear error but it also illustrates that by failing to consider all words in the claim, the Examiner has consequently failed to show that *Tang* teaches "each and every limitation of the claimed invention."[21]

Independent claims 18, 33 and 89 include limitations similar to those above. Accordingly, the section 102 rejection of those claims is improper for at least the same reasons given above.

The section 102 rejection of dependent claims 2-9, 11, 13-17, 19-23, 25-28 and 90 is improper for at least the same reasons for which the rejections of the claims on which they depend is improper.

[20] *In re Wilson*, 424 F.2d at 1385; *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579.
[21] *See Novo Nordisk Pharm., Inc. v. Bio-Technology General Corp.*, 424 F.3d 1374 (Fed. Cir. 2005).

Section 103 rejections

As discussed in detail below, the section 103 rejection is improper for at least the following reasons:

1. The section 103 rejection of dependent claim 10 is improper for at least the same reasons for which the rejections of claim 1 and claim 7 are improper;
2. Regarding claim 12, *Malik* fails to teach "automatically performing the action . . . [if] the third person is available to converse";
3. The Examiner has failed to identify any reason to combine *Tang* and *Malik*;
4. Regarding claim 24, *Rudy* fails to teach "*comprising a telephone configured to send the request to converse*"; and
5. Regarding claim 29, *Rudy* fails to teach "*the switched local area network is configured to connect to an internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway.*"

Section 103 rejection of claim 12

***Malik* fails to teach "automatically performing the action . . . [if] the third person is available to converse"**

Claim 12 recites the additional limitation of:

> a*utomatically performing the action further comprises forwarding the request to converse to a third person if a current status of the second person is that the second person is unavailable to converse and the third person is available to converse*

The Examiner suggests that *Malik* teaches this claim limitation in the following passages:

> *The message reply logic 340 is configured to generate and convey an auto-reply message in response to receiving an IM message from a sender. The message transfer logic 345 is configured to generate and convey all IM messages that may be used in the event that an incoming IM message is transferred to a transferee. The message forward logic 350 is configured to determine the presence of the recipient at all of the recipient's IM addresses, and, also, to determine the last active time for each of those IM addresses. Additionally, the message forward logic 350 is configured to generate and convey all IM messages that may be used in the event that an incoming IM message is forwarded to another of the*

> *recipient's IM addresses.*[22]
>
> *The indicator messages 360 include all messages that are used in generating the XML streams. Thus, for example, the indicator messages 360 may include an auto-reply message that reads, for example, "Romeo is currently unavailable to reply to your IM message." For auto-forward, the indicator messages 360 may read "Romeo has most recently been active at romeo@verona.it" or "Your message is being forwarded to Romeo at romeo@verona.it." For auto-transferring, the indicator messages may read "Your message is being forwarded to Mercutio." While not explicitly provided, it should be appreciated that any message to be included in the auto-message-handling process may be stored as one of the indicator messages 360.*[23]

However, *Malik* fails to teach the limitations of claim 12, because claim 12's performance of the action is contingent on two conditions: (a) *a current status of the second person is that the second person is unavailable to converse* and (b) *the third person is available to converse*. *Malik*'s messages are "auto-forwarded" and "auto-transferred," without any checking whatsoever as to the availability of "Romeo" or "Mercutio." Therefore, *Malik* fails to teach claim 12's limitations of checking the status of the second person and the third person and therefore *Malik* does not correct *Tang*'s deficiencies. Accordingly, the combination of *Malik* and *Tang* does not invalidate Appellant's claim 12 under section 103 and the Examiner's section 103 rejection is consequently erroneous.[24]

The Examiner has failed to identify any reason to combine *Tang* and *Malik*

Moreover, even if *Malik* were to teach the limitations of claim 12, the Examiner fails to advance a convincing line of reasoning as to why one of ordinary skill would combine the teachings of *Malik* and *Tang*.[25]

The Examiner states that the purpose to combine the references would be to ensure "*communication is carried out even if one of the member* [*sic*] *of the party is unavailable to converse*."[26] However, instead of finding a motivation to combine, the Examiner has simply

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[22] *Malik,* paragraph 75.
[23] *Malik*, paragraph 76.
[24] *Velander*, 348 F.3d at 1363.
[25] *See Ex Parte Clapp*, 227 U.S.P.Q.2d 972, 973 (Board. Pat. App. & Inf. 1985).
[26] *Final Office Action*, November 16, 2007, page 15.

paraphrased one of claim 12's limitation. Such paraphrasing does not make the combination of the two references obvious. Additionally, *Malik* fails to even teach this alleged purpose. In *Malik*, the communication is not carried out if one "*of the member* [*sic*] *of the party is unavailable to converse*." Instead, the message is simply auto-forwarded or an auto-reply message is generated. However, the recipient of the message may still be unavailable to converse, even after an auto-forward. Once again, the Examiner has made a hindsight conclusory assertion that fails to meet the threshold for an determination of obviousness.[27]

Section 103 rejection of claim 24

***Rudy* fails to teach "a telephone configured to send the request to converse."**

Claim 24 includes the additional limitation of

> "*a telephone configured to send the request to converse.*"

The Examiner regards this claim limitation as taught by the following passage from *Rudy*:

> *For example, client machines could include remote or mobile devices such as cellular telephones, pagers, landline display screen telephones, set-top boxes, general purpose computers, and so forth.*[28]

However, the only similarity between the above passage and claim 24's limitation is that telephones are used. In Appellants' claim 24, the telephone sends "the request to converse." However, in *Rudy*, the telephones receive messages instead of sending them. This is because the telephones are referred to as "client machines" and client machines receive messages. For example, *Rudy* claim 1 states:

> *transferring a client version of an e-mail item to a user's client machine for presentation by the client machine.*

Because *Rudy* fails to teach the additional limitation of claim 24, the combination of *Rudy* and *Tang* would fail to teach each limitation of the claim. As a result, the section 103 rejection of claim 24 was improper.[29]

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[27] *KSR Intern. Co. Teleflix Inc.*, 127 S.Ct. 1727, 1731 (2007).
[28] *Rudy,* column 26, lines 20 to 24.
[29] *Velander v. Garner*, 348 F.3d 1359, 1363 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (stating that an obviousness analysis is only proper if "all the elements of an invention are found in a combination of prior art references").

Section 103 rejection of claim 29

***Rudy* fails to teach a "switched local area network" that is "configured to connect to an internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway"**

Claim 29 includes the limitation of

> "*the switched local area network" being "configured to connect to an internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway*."

The Examiner regards this claim limitation as taught by the same passage of *Rudy* that the Examiner incorrectly contended taught the limitation of claim 24, discussed above. However, this passage teaches neither a "*switched local area network*" nor an "*internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway*." In fact, Appellants are puzzled by the Examiner's equation of "*cellular telephones*" and "*pagers*"[30] with a "*switched local area network*." Accordingly, because *Rudy* fails to teach the additional limitation of claim 29, the combination of *Rudy* and *Tang* fails to teach each limitation of claim 29. As a result, the Examiner's section 103 rejection of claim 29 was improper.[31]

The section 103 rejection of dependent claims 30-32 is improper for at least the same reasons for which the rejection of claim 29 is improper.

(8) Conclusion

Please apply the $510 charge for filing this appeal brief, along with any other charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06-1050, referencing attorney Docket No. 08575-088001.

[30] *Rudy,* column 26, lines 20 to 24.
[31] *Velander*, 348 F.3d at 1363.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendix of Claims

1. A method comprising:

receiving from a first person a request to converse with a second person using a selected first one of two or more selectable communication modes; and

in response to the received request, automatically performing an action using a second one of the two or more communication modes, selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the second person.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the rule is created by the second person using a user interface on a computing device.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule from a set of one or more rules based on a condition statement of the rule.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule based on the one of two or more communication modes.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule based on an identity of the first person.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising selecting the rule based on a current status of the second person.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising determining an electronic document associated with the first person and retrieving the electronic document if the second person indicates a desire to view the document.

8. The method of claim 7 further comprising displaying the electronic document to the second person.

9. The method of claim 7 further comprising retrieving the electronic document from an e-mail storage module, wherein the electronic document is an e-mail message.

10. The method of claim 7 further comprising retrieving a calendar of the second person from a calendar storage module, wherein the electronic document is the calendar.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically performing the action further comprises enabling the first person to leave a message if the current status of the second person is that the second person is unavailable to converse.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein automatically performing the action further comprises forwarding the request to converse to a third person if a current status of the second person is that the second person is unavailable to converse and the third person is available to converse.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein the one of two or more communication modes comprises a voice conversation communication mode.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the voice conversation communication mode comprises Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

15. The method of claim 1 wherein the one of two or more communication modes comprises a voice/video conversation communication mode.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein the one of two or more communication modes comprises a graphic text-based conversation communications mode.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the graphic text-based conversation communication mode comprises Instant Messaging.

18. A system comprising:

a computing device comprising:

a transceiver configured to receive a request to converse with a user of the computing device using a selected first one of two or more selectable communication modes; and

an integration module configured

to automatically perform an action using a second one of the two or more communication modes, selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the user based on the received request.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the integration module comprises a microphone and a speaker.

20. The system of claim 18 wherein the integration module comprises a user interface hook to detect when the user is interacting with the computing device.

21. The system of claim 18 wherein the integration module comprises a user interface that enables the user to specify the action.

22. The system of claim 18 further comprising a network.

23. The system of claim 22 further comprising a second computing device configured to send the request to converse.

24. The system of claim 22 further comprising a telephone configured to send the request to converse.

25. The system of claim 22 wherein the network comprises a switched local area network.

26. The system of claim 25 wherein the transceiver is further configured to receive a request to converse via the switched local area network.

27. The system of claim 25 wherein the switched local area network is configured to connect the computing device to an internet.

28. The system of claim 25 wherein the switched local area network is configured to connect the computing device to an intranet.

29. The system of claim 25 wherein the switched local area network is configured to connect to an internet protocol/public switched telephone network gateway.

30. The system of claim 29 wherein the network further comprises a second switched local area network.

31. The system of claim 30 wherein the second computing device sends the request to converse via the second switched local area network.

32. The system of claim 31 wherein the network further comprises a telephone system and a public switched telephone network configured to enable the telephone to send the request to converse to the computing device.

33. An article comprising a machine-readable medium that stores executable instruction signals that cause a machine to:

receive, from a first person, a request to converse with a second person using a selected first one of two or more selectable communication modes; and

in response to the request, automatically perform an action using a second one of the two or more communication modes, selection of the second mode being determined by a rule created by the first user.

89. A system comprising:

a computer device;

a user interface that is configured to enable a user to interact with a person using one mode of at least two of voice conversation, voice-video conversation, graphic text-based conversation, fax, and electronic mail; wherein the interaction comprises:

creating a rule to cause the computer device to automatically perform an action using a first one of the at least two modes, selection of the first mode being based on a request to converse with the user using a selected second communication mode;

viewing an automatically generated listing of a set of persons, the listing comprising a name, presence information, and communication modes available for the user to communicate with the person from the set of persons;

selecting the person from the set of persons;

selecting a communication mode from the communication modes available to communicate with the person;

retrieving information about a person using an identifying characteristic of the person, where the identifying characteristic is selected by the user from a display; and

communicating with the person.

90. The system of claim 18 in which the integration module is also configure to interact with the two or more communication modes, the modes including at least two of voice conversation software, voice-video conversation software, graphic text-based conversation software, fax software, and electronic mail software.

Evidence Appendix

NONE

Related Proceedings Appendix

NONE